



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

*Olympia, WA 98504-5710*

May 25, 2006

Dear Caregiver:

As a caregiver, you have a critical role in the life of the child you care for. You provide care for the child on a day to day basis and understand the child's needs, likes, dislikes and other important information about him or her. Children's Administration (CA) recognizes that as a caregiver, the information you have is based on a daily relationship with the child and we believe it is important to include you when making decisions about the child.

To more effectively involve you, we have updated our policy, beginning July 5, 2006, to require CA social workers to notify you:

- Within 10-days of a Court Hearing regarding the child in your care. If a court review hearing is scheduled sooner (e.g. within 7 days) and does not allow enough time for a 10-day notice, CA will notify you as soon as possible.
- Within 48 hours (when possible) of a case staffing regarding the child in your care. If an emergency meeting is called, you will receive notice as soon as possible.

Our goal is to keep you informed about the child's case and encourage and support your involvement in the case planning. We hope that you can attend and participate in the staffings and Court Hearings. The information you have about the child can help inform all parties involved and support a strong case plan.

As the caregiver, you may attend the Court Hearings in person and/or send a written statement with information about the child(ren). At the hearing, the Court typically wants to hear:

- How the child is doing in school
- How the child is adjusting in your home
- If there are any medical or counseling needs
- If you have thoughts or ideas on the child's case plan.



Due to differences in Court procedures, the Court makes the decision whether or not you will speak directly to the court. Your child's social worker can provide more information about the court procedures and how to provide information about the child to the court.

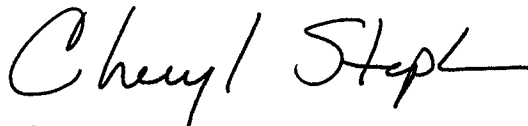
If you are unable to attend a Court Hearing or would prefer to submit something in writing, you can fill out the attached **Caregivers Report to the Court** form or use the form as a guide for providing information to the court. This form allows you to give the Court information about how the child is doing. The social worker or the Guardian Ad Litem for the child can file your written report with the Court.

I hope you will take the opportunity to attend the Court Hearings and staffings and share your impressions of the child and the child's case plan with the court and with the Department.

If you have additional questions you may contact your child's social worker. You may also get a written copy of this policy by going to the foster parent and caregiver web page at: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/> or contacting the social worker.

Thank you for all you do for children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl Stephani". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Cheryl Stephani, Assistant Secretary  
Children's Administration